

This walk, with splendid views for much of the way, is in the hilly area of the Lenches, north of Evesham. Starting at Church Lench, the route goes down the Rous Lench with its impressive court, before climbing back to the Wychavon boundary and Warwickshire border at Rough Hill. The five villages of the Lenches are all mentioned in the Domesday Book. Some appear in the boundary charters of 714, so they were estates in the early days of the Great Kingdom of Mercia. Map reference of start SP 023 512. 7 Miles

Church Lench is on a minor road midway between Inkberrow and Evesham. The walk starts from the short gravel road which leads to the village hall.

Start the walk by going out to the road and crossing straight over to go down the road to Evesham. In 50 yards turn right into the entrance to the Old Post House and go down the hill with the fence on the left. Beyond the stile continue with the hedge on the right, over two footbridges. Now go straight up the field, with the hedge over to the left, and then down to another footbridge. Keep the same direction up the centre of the next two fields to a stile into a wood. The path goes down and then to the right and in a few yards, left round the edge of the Golf course, to continue with a hedge on the left. At the sharp bend in the lane turn right.

Pass the turning on the right to Ab Lench and in 200 yards, opposite Lower Farm, turn right on to a bridleway. Go to the lane and then on up the to the hill to a stile on the left. Go straight ahead and continue along the top of a wood. There are magnificent views from the high ground, from the Clent Hills, the Cleeves and the Abberley Ridge to the Malvern's with the Welsh mountains beyond.

When the wood ends, bear left to a gate, then right to a stile and so down to a lane. Turn left downhill for 200 yards to a gate a stile on the left, just past a small bridge. In the field turn right and go to a stile on a fence, then walk parallel to the hedge on the right to the lane. Go down to the right as far

WALK 9 CHURCH LENCH

7 miles

OS MAPS:

Landranger 150
Pathfinder 997
(SP 05/15)

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Map reference of start SP 023 512

as the bend and through a gate on the left. The route now goes up the fields next to the wood on the right. On nearing the top of the second field look for a stile on the right. This is where the Wychavon Way comes out of the wood. Bear left, climbing slightly, to the far corner of the field. Here the Wychavon Way turns left and you go over a stile and along the side of an orchard. Keep ahead to the road and turn left. Walk down the hill, facing the oncoming traffic, into Rous Lench. The village got its name because the manor was in the hands of the Rous family for 500 years. The village green displays the munificence of one of the owners of the court. Dr Chafy's Letter Box is a most unusual object. The size of a Wendy House, some 10 feet high, it can be seen on the left of the green.

Go into the churchyard and notice the south doorway and above it the smaller relief sculpture of another, with the figure of Christ seated and blessing. They are both Norman. Continue along the

path, through a kissing-gate in the tall hedge, into the park. On the left, behind the bushes, is a moat. This was the site of the manor house until the early 16th century when the house was damp and needed replacing. The new house was built on higher ground on the site of the house seen across the park ahead. The greater part of the original house was pulled down in the early 19th century and what is now seen of the external timbering has been much restored. The manor had been in the hands of the Beauchamps of Elmley Castle and the tenants adopted the name of Lench at the time of Henry VII. In 1382 it was sold to John Rous of Ragley and then in 1876, to the Reverend William Kyle Westwood Chafy D.D. of Sherborne.

Walk up the park next to the moat and when it ends continuing ahead, to the right of the Wellingtonia tree, to a fence. Cross the old garden to another fence and, keeping the same direction, go up the bank to a row of trees. Go across the field beyond, to a stile in the hedge on the right of the wood. From here bear right to the far corner. Now keep ahead to join a track which becomes a hedged track. When this reaches a road turn left and go down to two pillars on the left which mark the start of a bridleway. This is known as Franklin's Lane.

Go through the small bridle gate and in 1/2 mile, at the top of the rise, turn right along a track. On reaching North Farm turn right at the beginning of the farmyard and go through a gate. In the field keeping near the hedge on the right and at the corner turn left to enter a small wood along a track. Follow the path to a footbridge and then a stile. Walk by the left hedge to a stile in a fence and go up the paddock to the corner. Turn right beyond the stile and continue until you reach the road, where you turn left.

Just over 1/4 mile along the road, not far from the middle of the village, there is a footpath sign on the right. Go over the stile and walk up the first field and in the second, bear left to the far end of the church wall and start of the walk.